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TAGS: PHUM PREL PGOV KDEM EG
SUBJECT: EGYPTIAN COURT DISMISSES LAWSUITS AGAINST
DEMOCRACY ACTIVIST, OTHERS REMAIN PENDING

REF: 07 CAIRO 3455

Sensitive but unclassified. Please protect accordingly.

1.(SBU) On April 29, a Cairo court dismissed two civil lawsuits accusing Egyptian democracy activist Saad Eddin Ibrahim of "being a fugitive" and "giving information to a foreign country." The lawsuits, one filed by the leader of a minuscule political party and the other by a presidential appointee to Egypt's Shoura Council, were part of a group of up to twenty lawsuits filed against Ibrahim and the Ibn Khaldoun Center (IKC), which he directs (and which receives USG financial support), in late 2007 by political figures claiming to be acting individually (reftel). Over the last several months, Egypt's courts have consistently ruled in Ibrahim's favor, dismissing lawsuits and even awarding him damages in a libel action he filed against the nominally independent, pro-government, Rose Al Yousef newspaper. According to the IKC, only "5 or 6" of the cases remain pending against Ibrahim, and all cases against the IKC have been dismissed.

2.(SBU) Comment: The lawsuits are a tactic by government supporters and others seeking to burnish nationalist credentials and to curry favor with elements of the government that hate Ibrahim, in order to maintain pressure on him and the IKC and keep him out of the country (he is currently residing in Istanbul). Egypt's courts have not been complicit, as they handle these cases expeditiously and transparently, despite many of the plaintiffs' close ties to the government.

SCOBED